(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) A petition has been received on behalf of the domestic industry by the Designated Authority appointed under Customs Tariff Act, 1975 read with the rules made thereunder, alleging dumping of some finished steel products. The application is under examination by the Designated Authority for initiation of investigation.

Provision exists in the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 and rules framed thereunder to investigate cases of dumping and levy an additional customs duty, if it is established that such dumping causes material injury to the domestic industry.

Project and exports by SAIL

1378. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: SHRI MUKESH R. PATEL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Project of Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) is on decline;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons* therefor;

(c) whether SAIL is not able to increase the export of steel produced by Bhilai Steel Plant, Bokaro Steel Plant etc.;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) what measures have been taken by Government to improve the export by SAIL, and the overall profit of SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) The profit (before tax) in SAIL in 1996-97 was Rs. 602* crores as compared to Rs. 1318.61 crores in 1995-96. During the year 1996-97 SAIL had to face abnormal increase in input costs on account of cost escalation in coal price petroleum price, railway freight, power tariff, special custom duties etc.. The impact of these escalations is about Rs. 1000 crores while only a part of this impact could be neutralised through improvement in operational efficiencies. Other reasons, which have affected the profitability, include decline in the international prices of steel and freer imports bringing the margins under stress as also the sluggish market behaviour etc. due to which SAIL could not pass on the impact of input cost escalation to the customers.

(c) and (d) During 1996-97 SAIL exported 478.81 thousand tonnes of steel as against 406.6 thousand tonnes in 1995-96.

There Has been a quantum jump in exports in the first quarter of 1997-98. Two lakh tonnes of steel has been exported, registering a growth of about 150% - over same period last year. In addition, about 60,000 tonnes of Pig Iron were also exported in the first quarter of 1997-98 against nil exports for first quarter previous year.

(e) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis to improve its performance, which include modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants, improving techno-economic factors i.e. reduction in ; coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield, extensive customer contact, market oriented product-mix, improvement in quality, long term relationship with customers, leadership in service and customer satisfaction, strict control and monitoring of operating costs, higher productivity and greater autonomy to field officers, etc.